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Khasi religion. If the marriage has been celebrated according to the *pynkhar synniat* rite, a *lolang* (go-between) is necessary on each side, also the *kni*, or maternal uncles of the parties, to witness the divorce. In other cases the presence of the *lolang* is unnecessary, but some acquaintances and friends as well as the relatives on both sides should witness the ceremony. The husband and the wife each bring five cowries (*shia*), or, more commonly nowadays, five pice. The wife gives her five cowries or pice to her husband, who places them with his, and then returns the five cowries or coins to his wife, together with his own five. The wife then returns the ten shells or coins to the husband who throws them on the ground. A crier (a *sing pyrta shoong*) then goes round the village to proclaim the divorce, using the following words:—

"Kaw—hear, oh villagers, that U—— and K—— have become separated in the presence of the elders. Hoi! thou, oh, young man, canst go and make love to Ka—— for she is now unmarried (*khynnar*), and thou, oh, spinster, canst make love to U——. Hoi! there is no let or hindrance from henceforth." Among the Khasis divorce must be by mutual consent, and the ceremony must take place in the open air. Until the divorce ceremony has been performed as above described, neither husband nor wife can marry again, but after it has taken place, either can remarry, but not within the family of the divorced husband or wife. In the event of a husband or wife being absent for a long period, say ten years, without any communication having been received from either of them, a divorce ceremony is performed by the relatives on his or her behalf. It is stated by U *Joshua Roy* [1] that the rule of monogamy is not so strict for the husband as it is for the wife, he can contract an informal alliance with another woman, the only prohibition being that she must not belong to the original wife's village. Such a wife is called *ka iyngo tuh*, literally, stolen wife, in contradistinction to the legally married wife (*ka iyngo kmie*). The children by the unmarried wife are called *ki khun khlaw* (children from the top). By *khlaw* from the top, is understood to mean children from the branches not from the root (*kyrsi*) of the tree. Such children cannot claim

[1] See page 18, "Ka Niam Khasi." (U Joshua Roy.)

respective villages; sometimes, however, there are disputes regarding those lands between the different villages. Such disputes are settled by the Lyngam Sirdars of villages or by the Sirdars sitting with the two Lyngkors of the Siemship. If the disputes cannot be settled by these officials to the satisfaction of the parties, the latter are taken by the Lyngkors and Sirdars to the Siem of Nongstoin, who tries the case with the aid of the State mantris.

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LAWS REGARDING OTHER PROPERTY.

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There is no separate law applying to personal property, as opposed to real property, amongst the Khasis.

DECISION OF DISPUTES.

Khasi Courts of Judicature.

In the first place a complaint is made before the Siem, or chief, against a certain party or parties. The facts and circumstances of the case are then detailed before the chief and his headmen, the ostensible object being to attempt to bring about a compromise between the parties. If no reconciliation can be effected, a crier (*u nong pyrta shnong*), or in the Jaintia Hills a *sangot*, is sent out to proclaim at the top of his voice the durbar which is to assemble the following evening. He proceeds to cry the durbar in the evening when all the inhabitants have returned to the village from their usual daily pursuits. With a loud premonitory yell the crier makes use of the following formula *:—

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"*Kase!* thou, a fellow-villager; thou, a fellow-creature; thou, an old man; thou, who art grown up; thou, who art young; thou, a boy; thou, a child; thou, an infant; thou, who art little; thou, who art great. *Hei!* because there is a contest. *Hei!* for to cause to sit together. *Ilei!* for to cause to deliberate. *Hei!* for to give intelligence together. *Hei!* about to assemble in durbar. *Hei!* for to listen attentively. *Ilei!* ye are forbidden. *Hei!* ye are stopped to draw water then

* What follows is a literal translation of the Khasi.

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203 694 not to cut firewood then; *Hei!* to go to cook then; *Hei!* to go to work then; *Hei!* to go a journey then; *Hei!* to descend to the valley then; *Hei!* he who has a pouch. *Hei!* he who has a bag. *Hei!* now come forth. *Hei!* now appear. *Hei!* the hearing them is to be all in company. *Hei!* the listening attentively then is to be all together. *Hei!* for his own king. *Hei!* for his own lord, lest destruction has come; lest wearing away has overtaken us. *Kaw!* come forth now fellow mates."

This proclamation is called *khong shong*, and by it all are stopped from going anywhere from the village the following day. Anybody who disregards the prohibition is liable to fine. [687] 695 The following day, towards evening, all the grown-up males of the village assemble at the durbar ground, the site of which is marked in some villages by rows of flat stones, arranged in an irregular circle, upon which the durbaris sit. The proceedings are opened by one of the headmen, who makes a long speech; then others follow, touching upon all sorts of irrelevant matters, but throwing out hints, now and then, bearing on the subject of accusation. By degrees the debate waxes warmer, and the parties get nearer the point. Then the complainant and the defendant each of them throw down on the ground a *tarlam*, or a bag containing betel and pan, lime, &c., in front of the durbar. These are regarded as the pledges of the respective parties and their representatives in the suit; they receive the name of *mawlo* (hence the Khasi term or *khong mawlo* for the two contending parties in the suit). There are pleaders on both sides called *kur sdit*, who address the durbar in lengthy speeches, the Siem being the judge and the whole body of the durbar the jury. Witnesses are examined by the parties; in former times they were sworn on a pinch of salt placed on a sword. The most sacred and most binding form of oath, however, is sworn on a *khong* (a hollow gourd containing liquor). As, however, the latter form of oath is regarded by the Khasis as a most serious ordeal, it will be described separately. The durbar sometimes goes on for several days. At length the finding of the durbar is taken, after the Siem has summed up, and sentence is pronounced, which generally consists of a fine in money, almost always accompanied by an order to the losing

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